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DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

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TAGS: PGOV PREL SO

SUBJECT: Somalia - TFG Loses Key Advisors

Classified by PolOff Jessica Davis Ba for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Somalia President Abdullahi Yusuf has lost one of his key advisors with the May 10 resignation of Mohamed Abdirizak, Permanent Secretary of the Office of the President. Post has also lost one of its primary interlocutors within the TFG. Abdirizak's resignation comes at a time when other TFG support staff in Mogadishu have also reportedly resigned, including the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. The capacity of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is limited. President Yusuf has admitted that he has been forced to keep on staff warlords and "stupid" men in order to balance clan-based representational formulas and to satiate particular clans with political appointments. Abdirizak was a clear exception and he was instrumental over the past year in helping us to advocate our policy priorities with conflicting parties.

¶2. (C) President Yusuf placed a great deal of trust in Abdirizak, who is a member of his Darod/Harti/Marjerteen clan and a U.S. citizen. Abdirizak played the leading role in preparing Yusuf for his trip to the U.S. and served as his translator/interpreter in most high-level meetings and press interviews. Abdirizak also served a key role in countering the influence of the hard-liners who represent the majority of Yusuf's inner circle. Yusuf will likely now return to a heavy reliance on Presidential Advisor Abdirizak Adam Hassan, who has worked with Yusuf since 2003. Adam, while also a close Embassy contact, is known for being a "security first" hard-liner.

¶3. (C) The TFG cabinet remains intact and Prime Minister Hussein remains on the job, though in private conversations the PM continues to question openly his staying power. Abdirizak, as a Somali-American with years of professional experience in the U.S., takes these skills with him. The TFG proposal to bring scores of Diaspora professionals to Somalia may enable more progressive perspectives to influence the thinking of Yusuf and key TFG leaders. But for now, Yusuf will likely revert to family and advisors whom he trusts from his clan, but who we suspect may not always have the best interest of Somalia as their priority.

RANNEBERGER